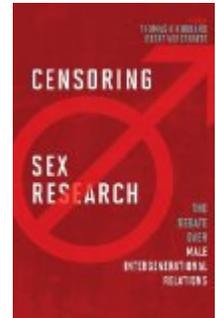




Thomas K. Hubbard, Beert Verstraete, eds.. *Censoring Sex Research: The Debate over Male Intergenerational Relations*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2013. 368 pp. \$36.95, paper, ISBN 978-1-61132-339-9.



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Thomas K. Hubbard and Beert Verstraete's edited volume, *Censoring Sex Research*, has had a tormented history. The volume responds to the widely bemoaned exclusion of psychologist Bruce Rind's transdisciplinary contribution on "Greek Homosexualities" to the special issue of *The Journal of Homosexuality* in 2005 (then published by Haworth) and subsequent dismissal from the journal in 2010 (by its successor publisher Taylor & Francis). The affair echoed an unprecedented denouncement in 1999 by the U.S. Congress of the findings of a meta-review by Rind and others on supposed corollaries of "child sexual abuse" (CSA). Calculated to rouse the ire of conservative watchdogs,[1] a preview abstract to Rind's 2005 article promised "an evolutionary model that synthesizes the empirical, cross-cultural, and cross-species data" on pederastic relationships, with animal data suggesting that "the seeds for pederasty were planted at the dawn of humanity." [2]

Censoring Sex Research unfolds Rind's mentorship-bonding/enculturation-alliance hypothesis in an extended lead essay, the product of several

augmentations and rounds of commentary. Elaborating on extant biosocial proposals, Rind suggests that, as a "recurring behavioral pattern," pederasty is "presumably genetic, the result of primate heritage, natural selection, and pederasty's functional utility in the EEA [Environment of Evolutionary Adaptedness]" (p. 72). Rind argues that pederastic infatuations greased the enculturation of boys into big game hunting and warfare, resulting in overall group cohesion and survival. Where persistent, they should be considered consequential to a vestigial sensitivity, not an idiopathic dysfunction.

The book's other contributions provide necessary (in any case courageous) lamentations on Anglo-American sexual culture but show only variable adherence to the themes of its title and subtitle. Two chapters present case studies on censorship in relation to "age-discrepant" sex (Patrick O'Neill and Janice Best, and Richard Yuill). Complementing Rind's chapter, another by Don Mader and Gert Hekma provides a useful historical overview and appreciation of "pederastic" age distri-

butions within “gay” history. Two further chapters present extended and chilling impressions of contemporary U.S. punitive sex laws and policy around minors (Andrew Heller and Hubbard).[3] Richard McAnulty and Lester Wright Jr.’s chapter continues an older legacy of methodological objections to Rind’s focus on CSA. Rind’s hypothesis is only directly addressed in the chapters by biologist Eric Alcorn and sociologist David Greenberg. The book concludes with Rind’s reply to McAnulty and Wright (debating the admissibility of biographic anecdote).

During its eight-year publication limbo, Rind’s thesis had already surfaced in 2012 in a minor quibble over the evolutionary merits of hebephilia, providing an awkwardly tangential footnote to a wider upheaval over hebephilia’s proposed DSM-5 candidacy.[4] Although hebephilia and pederasty may seem divergent foci, Rind’s central chapter and data largely reiterate this 2012 article. It may be observed in passing that Rind’s laboriously hypothesized intuition about pederasty/hebephilia as an “evolutionary mismatch” (hence the archaism/neologism) proved not too remote from this year’s DSM-5, which has no specific axe to grind with “the hebephile” (the rubric did not enter the books) or even “paraphilia” per se (not ipso facto a “mental disorder”).[5]

Why censor biosocial inferences of this sort? The taboo that has seemingly informed the protracted Haworth/Taylor & Francis debacle was the ban on making too much of “paiderastia.” The subject was ostensibly to remain safely contained within “gay history” (a state of affairs Rind considers biased). The problem, hardly one of mere censorship, animates the entire scientific-humanitarian mise-en-scène of homosexuality from Karl Heinrich Ulrichs’s earliest pamphlet onward (distinguishing *urnische* from *Knabenliebe*). Even earlier, as detailed in an 1843 alienist report, one can also find “pedophilic apologists” (over half a century *avant la lettre*) citing “l’exemple de Socrate et d’Alcibiade.”[6] Within forensic contexts since the

mid-1980s, most of such apologetics would fall under the clinical verdict of “rationalizations” if not “cognitive distortion,” as Rind complains (p. 292). The predicament of any aspiring pederasty studies, then, extends way beyond incidental bars to publication in LGBT outlets.

Although exhaustive discussion cannot be offered here, Rind’s evolutionary psychological turn raises elementary questions, not least regarding functionalist alignment of zoological, historical, anthropological, and clinical “evidence.” Examining the 2013 chapter and the 2012 article, one encounters such terms as “hebephilia,” “pederasty,” “pederastic-like behavior,” “gay boy-man sex,” and “age-discrepant homosex” referencing a single functional principle. The principle is presented as having been slanderously manhandled by an entire generation of gender critique, sex policing, child minding, and gay assimilationism. Alcorn opines that Rind’s thesis of a once-adaptive role for pederastic mentoring entails “an elaborate just-so story” that conflates evolution with adaptation and genetics with memetics (p. 153). Moreover, according to Alcorn, alternative, more parsimonious just-so stories could readily be postulated. Greenberg comes to comparable conclusions, although neither thinks that the nature of the argument allows definitive dismissals.

Greenberg’s comprehensive reply notwithstanding, an anthropologist’s reflection would have suited the book. Rind’s signature urgency to promote “scientific explanation” over “cultural rationalization” (he uses the lexeme *scien/ce* about seventy-five times in the book) becomes somewhat unworldly if one likens his case to that of an anthropologist dismissing a tribe’s incest/exogamy complex for its “political” nature and “moralistic fallacy.” (Illustratively, Rind rejects incest for being encumbered by the “wrong,” namely, “victimological,” model [pp. 12, 20, 40].) This leads to a kind of reverse victimology. “Turning the tables” on his nemesis the late 1970s anti-patriarchal “Feminist-Victimologist,” Rind offers a large pas-

tiche of attestations of “behavior” and proposes that the assemblage embarrasses (“corrects”) a totalitarian regime of cover-up, silenced facts, tententious samplings, and botched fact finding. Yet Rind admits that taboos and moral campaigns (around, for example, hygiene, decency, chastity, safety) require no factual basis. What they typically entail is the promotion of certain naturalistic and causal inferences, for example, by rewarding aggressive identification with perennial motifs of “child development,” “trauma,” and “damage,” and then reading the successes of these promotions--ubiquitous, aggressive identification--as their original and continued *raison-d'être*. Moral campaigns ossify into a deep sustaining logic as soon as and as long as enough leading factions recognize that the ensuing climate of apprehension and suspicion solves, or patches over, some kernel problems inhering in the accreditation and economizing of intimate gestures. Rind, with Mader and Hekma, commemorates eras and historical niches where pederasty could *figure as*, or even *prove*, useful alongside this largely intersexual intrigue, thus giving a hunted species of erotic receptivity the cachet of latent “functionality,” one tragically exposed to brutal and global “misconstructions.”

It is perhaps out of an anticipation of some remote future exploitability of “pederasty” that Rind resists the scientific sound bites in which society’s purges have always found their legitimation (for example, “crimes against nature,” “mental disorder,” “corruption of minors”). But the primary anthropological lesson that “pederasts” might have learned from the 1999 denouncement (and Rind’s case is uniquely instructive to this effect) was that around this hypertensive issue, what gets to be commissioned as valid and relevant data are only ever the expectable corollaries of an epoch of administrative stipulations (consent!), figures of speech (damage!), metonyms (harm!), and zoomorphisms (predator!). Rind mistakes these for empirical claims, for invitations to do science. They never were--not the early Christian epithets

(*paidophthoreo*), not their sixteenth-century translations (*Knabenschänderey*), not their nineteenth-century forensics (*Mißbrauch, attentats aux mœurs*), and not today’s pass phrases (*CSA*). The signature of taboo is carved deeply into the face of sociomedical consensus. It is the face of society naturalizing its stakes--precisely locating these stakes, if not in the blind mechanics of laws, at least on such opaque and impersonal planes as divine commandment, myth, totemic lore, genes, inner psyches: anywhere beyond the reach of mundane ethics. Yuill’s Foucauldian chapter admits a bit of this, as does Greenberg’s. Unfortunately Rind (an international chess master and statistics expert), after fourteen years of unrescinded denouncement by his own government, still demands that a rational society be *mathematically*, indeed *genetically*, transparent even around its core structuring taboos. Symptomatically and alarmingly, he deploys Michel Foucault, Thomas Szasz, and Alfred Kinsey in a single parenthetical line-up against the moral “blindness” he laments has “plagued sexological science” (and not once, pp. 4, 78, 282).

Rind, Yuill, Greenberg, and Hubbard all agree that nothing is likely to change around man-boy romances in the foreseeable future--Rind reserves two thousand years for the dust to settle and for historians to regain their cool. For now, his work raises the question, what does the male youngster, or his pederast/hebephile mentor, gain from being contoured in biosocial terms--or historical terms, for that matter? The former gesture is not new, as Rind reviews; neither is the latter. In the context of homosexuality, the utility of biological etiologies, no matter how compelling, has been duly doubted.[7] As victimological society at large, Rind makes a big deal out of pederasts behaving “like the animals they are”: scheming, recruiting, and networking predators grooming the young into populating outmoded cults of masculinity. How is Rind’s thesis of obsolescent boy-grooming tactics different from the feminist declaration of the expiration and bankruptcy of *Männerbünde*?

Would U.S. “punitive populism” around the issue become less punitive or less populist if it were forced to reckon with the wild conjecture of a hereditary, or yet another eulogy of age-old, man-boy love? Would a revisionary positioning of American *pederasts/hebephiles*, in between *pedophiles* and *gays*, mitigate and definitively demystify hatred against any or all?

Greenberg is alone in trying to answer why this is distinctly unlikely. His considerations recall well-known characterizations of incest taboos as the administrative crux of social units (if not, indeed, the dawn of humanity). Intimacy may cement bonds but also disrupt, confuse, and burden them. Modern states operate through impersonal bureaucracies that must minimize potential for favoritisms and special friendships that are incompatible with the procedural face of operational cells like schools and families, Greenberg notes. Modern administrative structures therefore preclude pedagogical eros. With extension and increased valuation of education, the sexual impossibility of the student/“child” will be extended and dramatized accordingly in proper defiance of whatever biological principle can be shown to underlie. Primatological and genetic reconstructions will, increasingly, sound like mere just-so stories. Quite regardless of their scientific cogency, they will turn out to be unimpressive and irrelevant—perfectly denounceable. Society shall not be checkmated by the facts of life.

Notes

[1]. David Glenn, “Spurred by Conservatives’ Outcry: Haworth Press Cancels Book on Homosexuality in Antiquity,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 52, no. 7 (October 7, 2005): A18.

[2]. See <http://www.haworthpress.com/store/product.asp?sku=5694> (accessed September 27, 2005).

[3]. Hubbard’s notion of *homo sacer* as applied to sex offenders lacks theoretical elaboration, but such can be found in Dale Spencer’s “Sex Offender as Homo Sacer,” *Punishment & Society*

11, no. 2 (2009): 219-240. Also not cited, Roger N. Lancaster’s recent *Sex Panic and the Punitive State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011) tackles many of the same issues, although he rather prefers to see homosexuality at the core of U.S. sex panics.

[4]. Bruce Rind and Richard Yuill, “Hebephilia as Mental Disorder? A Historical, Cross-Cultural, Sociological, Cross-Species, Non-Clinical Empirical, and Evolutionary Review,” *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 41, no. 4 (2012): 797-829.

[5]. Illustrative of ongoing sensitivities, the APA recently considered DSM-5 application of the rubric “sexual orientation” to pedophilia a “text error.” See <http://www.dsm5.org/Documents/13-67-DSM-Correction-103113.pdf> (accessed November 1, 2013).

[6]. The accused was a school teacher. See G. Ferrus, A. Foville, and A. Brierre De Boismont, “Attentat aux Moeurs, Condamnation, Appel, Expertise Médicale et Prononcé du Jugement,” *Annales Médicopsychologiques*, no. 1 (1843): 289-299.

[7]. William Byne and Edward Stein, “Varieties of Biological Explanation,” *Harvard Gay & Lesbian Review* 4, no. 1 (1997): 13-15.

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